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14 October 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR : Director, Photographic Intelligence Center  
ATTENTION : [REDACTED] 25X1A9a  
SUBJECT : Photo-Interpretation Request for One Area Along  
the Ecuador-Peru Boundary  
REFERENCE : Telephone Conversation of 9 October 1958 between  
[REDACTED]

25X1A9a

1. It is requested that available photography be examined to determine the major water divides between the Río Santiago and the Río Zamora, located in an area under dispute between Ecuador and Peru.

2. The area under dispute is located between 3° and 3°30' and 77°40' and 79°W. According to a Protocol drawn up in 1942, this segment of the Ecuador-Peru boundary was to follow "the water divide between the Zamora and Santiago rivers" from the Quebrada de San Francisco in the south to the confluence of the Río Santiago with the Yaupi in the north.

3. In December 1946 the U.S. Aeronautical Chart Service published an AAF Special Preliminary Base at 1:500,000 entitled Ecuador-Peru Boundary Study (1), Cordillera del Condor, that showed a third river, the Río Cenepa, having a course through most of the length of the area between the Río Santiago and the Río Zamora. This map was based on photography taken between 1943 and 1946, presumably including some radarscope photography taken for this specific purpose in 1946. The final report of the radarscope mission is attached herewith. The map, also attached, indicates that reliable photo coverage was available for all of the Río Cenepa and for most of the watershed area.

4. Subsequent to the distribution of the map to the governments of Ecuador and Peru and partially as a result of surveying done by the demarcation teams in the area at the time, a disagreement arose between the two countries regarding the implementation of the Protocol in an area where the terrain characteristics appear to differ radically from the geographic assumptions of the Protocol. This argument has continued to the present time and is still at an impasse.

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5. We have been informed in recent conversations with Desk Officers in the State Department that a statement was made in 1955 by Defense Department representatives to the effect that no definitive opinion could be given from available materials as to how many water divides exist between the two rivers (the Santiago and the Zamora). On the basis of that statement, the State Department adopted the position that there is no reliable information regarding the terrain between the two rivers.

6. Since the production of the AAF Special Preliminary Base would indicate that at least the major drainage features are determinable from photography available in 1946, it is thought desirable that a review of the photography be made in order to determine the validity of the 1955 statement by Defense, and -- if it was not entirely accurate -- to establish exactly what can be said to be true regarding the water divides in the area in question.

7. The result of this current, independent photo-interpretation will be incorporated in a review of the boundary problem in this area and transmitted to the State Department for their use in diplomatic negotiations at such time as they deem appropriate.

8. Target date: as soon as feasible, since negotiations regarding the boundary dispute are currently active.

FOR THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR RESEARCH AND REPORTS

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